The Unitarian Calendar

That man may last, but never lives,
Who much receives, but nothing gives;
Whom none can love, whom none can thank,
Creation's blot, creation's blank.

—Thomas Gibbons.

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Local offices at 104 East 20th Street, New York City; 105 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill., and 376 Sutter Street, San Francisco, Cal.

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THE GREATER UNITY

REV. F. M. BENNETT

Of the Unitarian Society, Lawrence, Kansas.

Out of the contacts and conflicts of convictions the higher truth issues. If we give it a chance the greater harmony will be heard. It takes more than one instrument to make an orchestra, and each instrument must be played with great skill if the music is to be worthy. Even so, if we look for the unities in life and religion, we must expect them to issue from the free contact of thought and feeling and will in human souls. The real unities spring not from systems of authority and repression, not from attempts to reduce all to one dead level of thought and effort. The real unities of life spring from the free expression of that which is dearest to the human soul. The divine harmony of religion is that which is alive and free, which gives voice to all the possibilities of life.

If we would be effective souls we should strive to gain a worthy philosophy, and having gained it, to live it. We should each be a worthy expression of the life of God. We should find our tasks and perform them in gladness. Each one should expect much from himself, and he should expect much of his brother also. We must count on growth in life and religion, and hold ourselves ready to be the living instruments of the purposes of divinity. Only as we do so shall the greater truth and the more beautiful harmony of the divine life appear among men.

PRAYER

REV. E. A. COIL

Of the First Unitarian Society, Marietta, Ohio.

Once upon a time my attention was called to a fruit-bearing orange tree in a small tub of earth. The tree, and the fruit it bore, would probably have weighed almost as much as the earth in the tub, and yet the earth, originally there, had not been perceptibly reduced in quantity by the growing tree. Now out of what had the life principle built up that tree and the fruit it bore? Not wholly out of the earth in the tub, for most of that was still there. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews said: "Things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." That is true of the orange tree and its fruit. They were not made of things which do appear. In some mysterious way that we do not understand, the life principle reaching out into the light, air and sunshine, as well as down into the earth, gathered unto itself and formed into a body of its own that which we call tree and fruit. Had we never seen orange trees and other kinds of vegetation grown in the manner I have indicated, we would say it is impossible, that the earth in which the seed or slip was planted would have to diminish in weight in such proportion as the tree increased; but experience has shown us that this is not the case. The orange tree alters no law of the universe. It simply conforms to law and thereby fulfills its mission in the production of the fruit it was designed to bear. It hath meat to eat that we know not of; but the Father, He knoweth, and they two work together to the end that a hungry world may be fed. Figuratively speaking, the petitions of the tree, offered up to nature, for all that it needs to make it all that it was intended to be are not in vain.

THE DIVINE UNITY

HENRY M. SIMMONS

Men prove alike the world over, and their religions are much alike. When Conway said he was studying the Scriptures, Thoreau asked: "Which Scriptures?" there are so many. The Christian has a grand Bible; but he cannot read it much without wishing that he might exchange a part of it for heathen literature. Human brotherhood was nobly taught in the early Church; but was also taught the century before by pagan Cicero "as distinctly," Lecky says. The divine Fatherhood was well declared by the Apostles; but when one of them preached it to the Athenians, he took his text from one of their own pagan poets; and the faith was already fossilized long before in the heathen name, Jupiter, the Heaven-Father. Duty to man and faith in God are taught little better in the average pulpit today than in that old Egyptian Prisse papyrus, whose very ink is supposed to have been dried centuries before Moses. Revelation is the monopoly of no one religion, and the wise men of all faiths have often united in this confession. Says the old Chinese apothegm: "The broad-minded man regards all religions as embodying the same truths." Says the Persian sentence: "To him who has arisen to the throne of the Highest, all religions are alike; Christians, Jews, Guebres, Moslems, all adore him in their several ways." And our own poet sings that in the love and self-sacrifice of all ages,

"I see the same white wings outspread,
That hovered o'er the master's head;"

and that in all lands religious truth is one, and

"Whoso hath eyes to see, may see
The tokens of its unity."

SALVATION BY CHARACTER

CHARLES G. AMES

The imagination of mankind has seized upon the alleged fact that the fine has been paid and the criminal let off by merely saying, "I accept the terms;" while the call to a life of loyalty has made no deep impression. The dramatic scene of the Crucifixion, as the supreme tragedy of history, has been portrayed thousands of times, and has melted millions of hearts. But emotion alone does not make character nor purify life. The superficial effect of such teaching on the population of Christian lands is a sad proof that a man may give full credit to the letter of gospel history, or to the doctrine of imputed righteousness, and be no more saved from sin than the criminal is saved from guilt by being let out of jail.

The protest against this irrational and immoral perversion was needed in the interest of Christianity itself, which has suffered such a caricature. For Christianity would be inferior to Judaism if it did not teach that "when the wicked man turneth from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live." To confess and forsake our sins is to find mercy. When the prodigal returns a penitent, the elder brother has no need to bear the father's wrath or to suffer the penalty of transgression, in order to satisfy some theoretic demand of justice.

Judge not of thyself by that which is unusual and extraordinary with thee, but by the tenor and drift of thy heart and life. A bad man may seem good in some good mood; and a good man may seem bad in some extraordinary fall.

—*Richard Baxter.*

"NOT ANYTHING *ELSE*"

There is a difference between a Unitarian and a person who isn't anything *else*. The sign zero may not stand for any quantity known or unknown, but that is no reason for assuming that it may represent the figure four. It isn't the figure four—and it is also true that it isn't anything else.

Those who appreciate what makes Unitarianism of real value in the world—its emancipating power, its increasing body of positive truth, its loyalty to genuine values, its enduring sanity, its calmness and assurance amid all the perils of doubt and fear, its consciousness of God at work through human agencies, its fearless and triumphant ascendency over trial and death, and its inherent and optimistic humanitarianism,—these people go to a Unitarian church if they can find one to go to—and they cannot understand why any real Unitarian can stay away. He is the kind of man who in his enthusiasm can honestly say, in the words of a certain Missouri physician: "I say unhesitatingly that it is the only real, wholesome, sensible religion, the only scientific religion, and you have my prayer, if I ever prayed, for its unbounded success. I would that it were absolutely universal."

One would not call that man an artist who gives no thought to art, who never himself uses a pencil or a brush, who never troubles himself about paintings and statuary, but simply directs his heirs to place an artistic monument at the head of his grave.

To have a Unitarian minister for one's marriage or funeral; or to discover that one's grandmother was a Unitarian, does not make a man a Unitarian.

He isn't much of a husband who marries a certain woman just because he doesn't love anybody *else*. Such a marriage means one of two

things—either trouble; or a sort of domestic Nirvana, which is an absorption of all individuality among the neutral shadows of indifference.

There are few superstitions more effectual in creating the static attitude than the belief that religious obligations cease when one's orthodoxy expires.

It requires positive convictions to be a Unitarian.

THE COMING OF THE LIGHT

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING

Life has been an improving gift from my youth; and one reason I believe to be, that my youth was not a happy one. I look back to no bright dawn of life which gradually "faded into common day." The light which I now live in rose at a later period. A rigid domestic discipline, sanctioned by the times, gloomy views of religion, the selfish passions, collisions with companions perhaps worse than myself,—these, and other things, darkened my boyhood. Then came altered circumstances, dependence, unwise and excessive labors for independence, and the symptoms of the weakness and disease which have followed me through life. Amidst this darkness, it pleased God that the light should rise. The work of spiritual regeneration, the discovery of the supreme good, of the great and glorious end of life, aspirations after truth and virtue, which are pledges and beginnings of immortality, the consciousness of something divine within me then began, faintly indeed, and through many struggles and sufferings have gone on.

THE CHARACTER OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

REV. J. VILA BLAKE

Of the Church of All Souls, Evanston, Ill.

The Old Testament is written in Hebrew; the New Testament is written in Greek. Of course, they were composed long before there was any printing, and the first copies were manuscripts, and so they were for many hundred years. Now, these manuscripts do not agree among themselves. In a particular passage many of them will read one way, many of them another way. There are about one hundred thousand passages in the New Testament alone which the old manuscripts differ in the words; so that it is a work of great learning and labor to say what the text of the New Testament really is; and in many passages the best scholars differ in their judgment, and no one can feel any confidence whether such a passage should have one Greek word, as it is in one manuscript, or another Greek word, as it is in another manuscript. Now, perhaps, you will be told that these discrepancies are very trifling and do not affect any matters of doctrine. This is true in part, but it is not altogether true. In some cases the decision in favor of one word or another makes a great difference in what the passage teaches. Take down your Bible and open to the 1st Epistle of John, 5th chapter, 7th verse; there you will see a passage about the three heavenly witnesses. This passage is an entire interpolation. It does not belong in the New Testament at all, and is not found in a single old manuscript. Nobody knows how or by whom it came into the text, and to tell you the remarkable story how it crept into our Testament would take too long here. The most orthodox scholars agree that it is no part of the Bible. Yet, you will find

plenty of ignorant people, and even people who ought to know better, still quoting that text, and relying upon it to prove the Trinity. But, besides all this, what these hundred thousand uncertainties do prove incontestably is that you are quite right when you say you use your mind in regard to the Bible, and can not believe some parts of it; because, if the Bible was intended to require our implicit belief, and to give us certain knowledge of truth, I think we may be sure that God would not have left it to fall into such a host of uncertainties as to the very words of it.

True dignity abides with him alone
Who in the silent hour of inward thought
Can still suspect and still revere himself
In lowliness of heart. —*Wordsworth.*

FREEDOM OF INQUIRY IN RELIGION

REV. J. T. SUNDERLAND

Unitarians believe that the same God who is the author of religion, is also the author of reason; that there is no other way in which truth can possibly be separated from error in religion except by investigation and the use of reason; and, therefore, that it is of the highest importance that there should be everywhere the freest and fullest inquiry with reference to religious things,—in this inquiry every man being permitted to stand upon his own feet, and to judge for himself, subject to no dictation or pressure from councils, synods, conferences, presbyteries, creeds, catechisms, fathers of the church, doctors of the church, or preachers.

SALVATION

REV. JOHN PAGE HOPPS

Salvation is not something that depends upon church, or creed, or priest; it does not depend upon where we worship or what we believe, or how we have been baptized: it is something deeper than all that—it is entirely concerned with conscience, love and life. If anyone really hates sin and strives to please God, he is on the road to heaven. Priests may tell him he will be lost unless he receives their particular sacraments or believes in their particular creeds, but the well-instructed man will be too wise to believe them: he will know a man is acceptable to God, not for the church he attends, or the creed he holds, but for what he loves and seeks and is.

It is not when we are conscious of our faults that we are the most wicked; on the contrary we are less so. We see by a brighter light, and let us remember for our consolation that we never see our sins till we begin to cure them.

—*Fenelon.*

A DREAM

REV. WILLIAM C. GANNETT, D. D.

I venture to tell a dream that I had not long ago about Phillips Brooks. A mere dream, not a story; but even a dream may have parable-power. I had been working on hymns overnight, and woke in the morning to find myself wishing that I had Phillips Brooks' permission to change

just one word in the last line of his beautiful Christmas hymn, "O Little Town of Bethlehem" —the hymn that ends, "O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel." I wanted permission to print it "our *Hearts'* Emmanuel," to make it still more poetical, but mainly to make it more honest for personal use. After wishing my wish, I must have fallen asleep again; for the next thing I knew I was in the presence of Phillips Brooks up in heaven, the request on my lips. "May I alter the one word?" I pleaded, and explained my Puritan motive. "O yes, if you wish to," he heartily answered, and beamed a great smile. So encouraged, I ventured further and said, "You all sing the same words up here, I suppose?" "O never!" he answered quickly, "O never! we never sing the same words up here. But we all mean the same things by what we sing. It's the meanings that make the song here." A little abashed, like Abou Ben Adhem, I spoke more low, but cheerily still—"Down there we have to think of the words to get them honest to the meanings." "Yes, down there!" he replied, and beamed another great smile, as if bye and bye I, too, would know better. Then I awoke. My dream was like that—we cannot vouch for the words of a dream; and far be it from me to claim that I have quoted the good Bishop aright! Yet, I believe that what I seemed to hear is what he would say up there in his light — that it's the meaning that makes the song, and the heart's meaning at that; that these meanings are necessarily rendered in varying words by varying minds; and that while the rule for "down here" is, "Let each mind be true to itself in its utterance," the best of our hearts' truth is actually missed by us if we fancy that our own form of words or of thought is essential to the utterance.

BROKEN IDOLS

ROBERT B. DRUMMOND

When Christianity was introduced into the world there was a great breaking of idols.

Do you suppose there were none who sincerely mourned the destruction of that religion of grace and beauty which gave birth to so many exquisite forms that still, even in their mutilated state, ravish the eye and entrance the heart--that religion which erected the most majestic temples the world has ever seen and inspired much of its noblest verse; that there were none to whom it felt like the rending of their very hearts when they beheld the bright and joyous rites of that old worship giving place to the gloomy mystery, as they deemed it, of the Christians—a crucified Jew succeeding to all the bright deities of Olympus—or who really saw in every calamity that fell upon the great Roman Empire the anger of the old gods at the neglect of their rites? We are accustomed to think of all these things as mere superstitions, and to imagine that no reasonable being could possibly have any real belief in them, or any difficulty in parting with them. The truths of Christianity, it is thought, are so clear, so self-evident, so infinitely superior to anything paganism had to teach that they required merely to be stated in order to be at once joyfully embraced. But this is surely a very erroneous view resulting from a defective historical imagination and from want of sympathy. For the intelligent heathen the case was precisely reversed. To him it was Christianity which appeared as a gloomy superstition which commended itself only to the ignorant and the wretched, while nothing, he thought, but the most extraordinary fanaticism and obstinacy enabled its professors to adhere to their principles. A generous breadth of sympathy would enable us

to enter into these feelings without at all undervaluing the importance of the change from heathenism to Christianity. That change was not accomplished without many a hard struggle and many a bitter pang, without many heartburnings and many blighted affections; but that it was a necessary step in the onward march of mankind, and an immense moral gain, it is of course impossible to doubt.

BELIEF IN GOD

JENKIN LLOYD JONES

I believe so much in God that I believe in scarcely anything else. To me he is the totality of which all other things are but fragments. Without this unity in Him all is discord. But if, for reasons that, perhaps, it is not for me to understand, certainly not to judge, a brother hesitates where I venture, is silent when I speak, and doubts when I believe, but still is one of whom it may be said, as Theodore Parker said over the grave of one who called himself atheist, "O Father, though he denied Thine existence, he obeyed Thy laws," he belongs to my church, and any exclusion of him excludes me. Deny me the name Christian for that, if you will. I will not on that account lessen my fellowship nor cheapen my faith. He who said, "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, but he that doeth the will of the Father" is on my side. I hold to the *thing*, even if the *name* must go. Now again, I am bound to recognize the fact that, historically speaking, those who dissent from me and do make essential those things which I declare unessential, cardinal those things which I regard accidental, have a far better right to interpret the word Christian than I have: that is, they have time past and the present majority on their side.

UNITARIAN HYMN

He leads us on by paths we did not know;
Upward He leads us, though our steps be slow;
Though oft we faint and falter on the way,
Though storms and darkness oft obscure the day,
Yet when the clouds are gone,
We know He leads us on.

He leads us on through all the unquiet years;
Past all our dreamland hopes, and doubts, and fears
He guides our steps; through all the tangled maze
Of losses, sorrows, and o'erclouded days
We know His will is done,
And still He leads us on.

And He, at last—after the weary strife,
After the restless fever we call life,
After the dreariness, the aching pain,
The wayward struggles which have proved in vain,
After our toils are past —
Will give us rest at last.

Hiram O. Wiley, 1865.

One good result of actual dealing with the raw material of happiness and usefulness, which life submits to us, is that, although we may not make of it what we hoped to create, we may make something of more service to humanity. We cannot build bridges to the moon nor turn stones into gold, after the dream of the old alchemists; but we can build real bridges over creeks and rivers; we can create genuine riches of knowledge and of others' appreciation and love. —*Rev. George A. Thayer.*

THE ESSENCE OF THE CHRIST IDEA

JAMES MARTINEAU

Religion, even in its most intellectual forms, can never entirely lose its symbolical character; and the real interest of its doctrines will usually be found far behind the apparent. Had the question respecting the person of Christ concerned merely the composition of an historical individual, human or superhuman, it could never have stirred so intense a passion, and tracked its way through Christendom with such a line of storm. The secret of the strife lies deeper. He stands in it not for himself, but for mankind; and the doubt, whether within that meek and suffering form the Divine essence is hid, truly means, to those who shrink from it, whether, from us, too, any divine life is possible, and the Father of spirits will take up his abode with us. It is not the Jesus of the biographers but the ideal of our spiritual humanity, the type and head of our race in its heavenly relations, whose seamless robe has been torn by the rude hands of controversy; and were it not that his problem and ours were bound up together, that his divineness was the assumed measure of our communion with God, and that what was asked about him was answered about us, the inquiry must have tired itself out in traversing the ages. But the mind returns with unexhausted wonder to the question, "What are we?" "Where do we stand in the hierarchy of being?" "Do we belong only to Nature beneath us, or can we live in love with God above us?" and, under the disguise of a Christology, these human issues have ever been upon their trial, and, to those whose ears are open, has mingled with the voices of angry disputants an undertone, not of softening piety alone, but of unsuspected sympathy.

NOTES

A beautiful booklet "In Memoriam" of the late Francis B. Hill, of Colorado Springs, has been published by his friends. Mr. Hill was for thirty-four years a prominent citizen of the city and from its beginning a member and generous supporter of the Unitarian church.

An Open Letter recently sent to the members of his parish by the Rev. F. Marion Ham, analyzes the religious situation in Reading, Mass., and points out many ways in which the cause of liberal religion may be benefited.

The various programs of the spring conferences in New England indicate much interest in the relation of the churches to social service, but in nearly every instance one or more addresses has been devoted to the methods of improving the spiritual influence of the churches.

In the recently organized church in far-away Edmonton, in the Province of Saskatchewan, Canada, we receive hopeful tidings of growth and influence. The minister, Rev. A. J. Pineo, during the month of May delivered sermons upon "The Risen Christ," "The Unknown God," "Man's Place in the Divine Order," and "What must I do to be saved?"

The relation of the church to other professions, etc., was recently well set forth in a series of addresses given at a banquet in All Souls' Church, Lincoln, Neb. They were presented in the form of toasts by the following speakers:—

Dr. S. E. Cook, "The Church and the Medical Profession;" Mrs. Olga Stastny, "The Church and the State;" Mr. I. H. Hatfield, "The Church and the Law;" Miss Anna Tibbetts, "The Church and the University;" Clark Dickinson, "The Church and the Kids."

We are glad to learn that the Rev. William A. Vrooman has consented to take temporary charge of the Unitarian pulpit in Winnipeg, pending the settlement of a permanent minister. Among the subjects lately treated by Mr. Vrooman are the following:—"The Christ of Pagan and Christian Mythology," "The Christ of the Gospel Tradition," "The Christ of Experience, or the Divine Life in Man," "The Christ Triumphant."

In the Calendar of the church in Montreal for May we find a brief biography and eulogy of the late William H. Barnes, L. L. D., who was minister of the Church of the Messiah in that city from 1880 to 1909, when he became pastor emeritus. During his long service he had become a well-known factor in the religious and educational life of Montreal.

At the Commencement of the Pacific Unitarian School for the Ministry which was held in the Unitarian Church of Berkeley, Cal., Dr. David Starr Jordan, President of Stanford University, delivered the address.

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